

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NSCE-00 SP-02 OES-02
DLOS-02 L-01 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ICA-01
PM-03 TRSE-00 OMB-01 HA-02 ACDA-10 (ISO) W
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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6556
INFO AMEMBSSY BRASILIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIOR TY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPA N

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1137

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, PLOS, EFIS, GY, NS
SUBJECT: THE STRAIN IN GUYANA/SURINAM RELATIONS

REF: GEORGETOWN 1095

1. FOREIGN MINISTER RASHLEIGH JACKSON CALLED ME IN LATE
AFTERNOON APRIL 12 TO INFORM ME THAT THE GUYANESE AMBASSADOR
TO PARAMARIBO (SYDNEY SAUL) HAD DELIVERED THET MORNING A
NOTE OF PROTEST TO PRIMIN ARRON OF SURINAM OVER ALLEGED
GOS ACTIONS ON THE CORENTYNE WHICH ARE INTERFERING WITH
THE LIVELIHOOD OF GUYANESE FISHERMEN AND WHICH, IN SOME
CASES, HAVE RESULTED IN THEIR ARREST AND CONFINEMENT.
NOTE GOES ON TO EXPRESS GREAT CONCERN ET THE APPARENT
DETERIORATION IN GUYANA-SURINAM RELATIONS RESULTING FROM
SUCH GOS ACTIONS. (JACKSON PARAPHRASED FROMTHE LONG NOTE
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WHICH HE HAD IN HAND BUT DID NOT OFFER TO ME TO READ.)

2. NOTE ALSO GOES INTO THE HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE LEFT BANK OF THE CORENTYNE AS THE BOUNDARY
BETWEEN GUYANA AND SURINAM, INDICATING THAT WHEREAS
GUYANA HAS TACITLY ACCEPTED THIS BOUNDARY ON THE UNDER-
STANDING THAT SURINAM WOULD NOT RESUSCITATE ITS CLAIM

TO THE NEW RIVER TRIANGLE, SURINAM HAS DONE JUST THAT. IMPLICATION IS THAT GUYANA WILL VIGOROUSLY REASSERT ITS CLAIM TO SOME OTHER BOUNDARY OTHER THAN THE LEFT BANK (PRESUMABLY MID-CHANNEL ON THE CORENTYNE). IF SURINAM CONTINUES TO LAY CLAIM TO THE NEW RIVER TRIANGLE.

3. NOTE CONCLUDES BY INVITING THE SURINEM GOVERNMENT, IF IT IS TRULY INTERESTED IN A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE VARIOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES, TO SEND A DELEGATION TO GEORGETOWN TO OPEN TALKS. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION JACKSON SAID THAT THE NOTE DOES NOT SPECIFY AT WHAT LEVEL TALKS MIGHT BE HELD.

4. JACKSON SAID THAT WHEN THE GUYANESE AMBASSADOR PRESENTED THE NOTE TO PRIMIN ARRON THE LATTER PROFESSED TO BE UNAWARE OF THE MANY INCIDENTS REFERRED TO IN THE NOTE. HE ASKED SAUL FOR SPECIFICS AND IN RESPONSE TO THAT REQUEST, THE DETAILS OF THOSE INCIDENTS WHICH GUYANA CONSIDERS THE MOST SERIOUS WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO HIM.

5. I THANKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER FOR SHARING THIS INFORMATION WITH ME AND PROMISED TO REPORT TO THE DEPT AND TO OUR MISSION IN PARAMARIBO. I SAID THAT OBVIOUSLY THE USG ZOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT ANY DISPUTE INVOLVING TWO GOVERNMENTS WITH WHICH WE ENJOYED FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE DIFFERENCES COULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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SPEEDILY RESOLVED TO THE SATISFACTION OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS.

6. JACKSON THEN WENT ON TO EXPRESS GUYANA'S DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF SURINAM HED NOT CHOSEN TO OPEN A DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN GEORGETOWN AFTER SURINAM'S INDEPENDENCE DESPITE THE FACT THAT THERE EARLIER HAD BEEN A SURINAM CONSULATE GENERAL IN THE GUYANESE CAPITAL. HE FEELS THAT IF THERE WERE SURINAMESE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION HERE, THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERN-

MENTS WOULD THEN BE MUCH EASIER. IN THE PAST, HE EXPLAINED, THERE HAD BEEN UNOFFICIAL EMISSARIES WHICH EACH GOVERNMENT HAD USED TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER; UNFORTUNATELY THIS INFORMAL LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS HAD DRIED UP IN RECENT TIMES, APPARENTLY, ACCORDING TO JACKSON, DUE TO THE ATTITUDE OF THE SURINAM GOVERNMENT. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WISHED TO RESOLVE ITS DIFFERENCES WITH SURINAM PROMPTLY AND HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE INVITATION TO SEND AD DELEGATION TO TALK WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY SURINAM.

7. ON LEAVING JACKSON'S OFFICE, THE BRITISH HIGH

COMMISSIONER (WHO IS ALSO ACCREDITED AS AMB TO SURINAM)
WAS WAITING TO SEE JACKSON AND I SUSPECT HE HAD BEEN
CALLED IN FOR THE SAME REASON THAT I HAD BEEN SUMMONED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1137

LIMDIS

8. I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE CONVERSATION TO REHEARSE
BRIEFLY FOR JACKSON'S BENEFIT THE STORY OF THE GOG'S
SEIZURE OF THE SURINAM-BASED SHRIMP TRAWLERS LAST
OCTOBER, AND THE CONCERN AT THAT TIME OF THOSE WHO HAD
HAD THEIR VESSELS CONFISCATED, THAT THE GOG HAD NOT
PROVIDED SUFFICIENT NOTICE TO PERMIT THE VESSELS TO BE
WARNED THAT THE 2003MILE ECONOMIC ZONE WAS BEING
ENFORCED. FURTHER I OBSERVED THAT THERE SEEMED A
LINKAGE IN THE MINDS OF MANY BETWEEN THE SEIZURE OF THE
TRAWLERS AND THE GOS DECISION NOT TO RENEW FISHING
LICENSES ON THE CORENTYNE FOR 1978. IF THIS WERE THE
CASE, PERHAPS IT WAS AN AREA TO EXAMINE IN SEARCHING
A SOLUTION. JACKSON APPEARED TO AGREE. I THEN TOOK MY
LEAVE REITERATING THE HOPE THAT THE DIFFICULTIES OF
TWO NEAR NEIGHBORS WITH SO MUCH IN COMMON COULD
BE SWIFTLY AND
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AMICABLY RESOLVED.

9. COMMENT: THE TIMING, SUBSTANCE AND FORM OF THE GUYANESE NOTE ARE INTERESTING. EQUALLY INTERESTING IS THE FACT THAT THE GOG IS DRAWING THE AFFAIR TO THE ATTENTION OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS. WERE THE GUYANESE INTERESTED ONLY IN A QUICK SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF THEIR FISHERMEN IN THE CORENTYNE, IT HARDLY SEEMS NECESSARY TO INCLUDE THE NEZ RIVER TRIANGLE AND A REOPENING OF THE QUESTION OF THE CORENTYNE BOUNDARY IN THEIR NOTE. FURTHERMORE FORMER GUYANESE FOREIGN MINISTER FRED WILLS HAS TOLD US THAT THE HAD NEGOTIATED THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A SETTLEMENT OF THE CORENTYNE DISPUTE WITH (PRIMIN ARRON IN FEBRUARY, A DEAL WHICH HE CLAIMS THE "HAWKS" IN THE CABINET REJECTED. THERE HAVE BEEN PERSISTING RUMORS IN GEORGETOWN THAT THE GUYANESE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO RAISE THE TEMPERATURE OF THEIR SIMMERING BORDER CONTROVERSY WITH SURINAM FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS. ACCORDING TO THESE RUMORS, BURNHAM WANTS TO HAVE THE DISPUTE WITH SURINAM AS "AN ACE IN THE HOLE" SHOULD HIS PARALLEL BUT UNRELATED EFFORT TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION BY REFERENDUM AND THUS POSTPONE ELECTIONS (SCHEDULED FOR THIS YEAR) FAIL. SHOULD THAT HAPPEN, THE ONLY OTHER LEGAL RECOURSE HE WOULD HAVE, UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, TO JUSTIFY THE POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS WOULD BE THE DECLARATION OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY. A BORDER CRISIS WITH SURINAM MIGHT VERY WELL SERVE AS A REASON FOR SUCH A DECLARATION IF IT WERE CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED AND BROUGHT TO CRESCENDO AT THE APPROPRIATE MOMENT. GETTING A SURINAMESE DELEGATION OVER TO GEORGETOWN AND ENGAGING THEM IN A LONG DRAWN OUT NEGOTIATION UNDER THE SCRUTINY OF THE GOG-CONTROLLED MEDIA COULD BE PART OF SUCH A

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MUSICAL SCORE. HOWEVER, THE CANNY SURINAMERS ARE PROBABLY CAPABLE OF FIGURING THIS OUT AND COMING UP WITH SOME COUNTER-PROPOSAL OF THEIR OWN TO AVOID ANY SUCH GUYANESE PLOY.

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